

## Two Old Dogs Prove Very Entertaining in ‘Escape Plan’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on October 18, 2013 - 5:51pm

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Rating: **4.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – Great action movies have one truth in common – they mix their face-offs with a psychological battle, which complements the pyrotechnics of invincible super humans. “Escape Plan,” with grizzled veterans Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger, is true to that form.

It’s enough to cheer that these two guys – who have made billions of dollars for their industry – can, at this point in their careers, get a decent story and script (by Miles Chapman and Jason Keller), and have a director (Mikael Hafström) who understands what makes each of them tick on screen. This is old school, but also fresh and modern, and contains symbolic themes of extreme rendition, identity, religion and yes, psychology. The man who once played Jesus, Jim Caviezel, now takes on the two action movie gods with a original spin on the evil warden. The film never flags, even though it features its share of impossibilities, stiff acting and of course, catchphrases.

Ray Breslin (Stallone) has an unusual occupation. He works for the Federal Prison Authority, and has himself intentionally incarcerated in high security institutions. He then tests their standards by intentionally figuring out how to escape, and is always successful. His team includes security industry CEO Lester Clark (Vincent D’Onofrio), Attorney Abigail (Amy Ryan) and computer expert Hush (50 Cent).



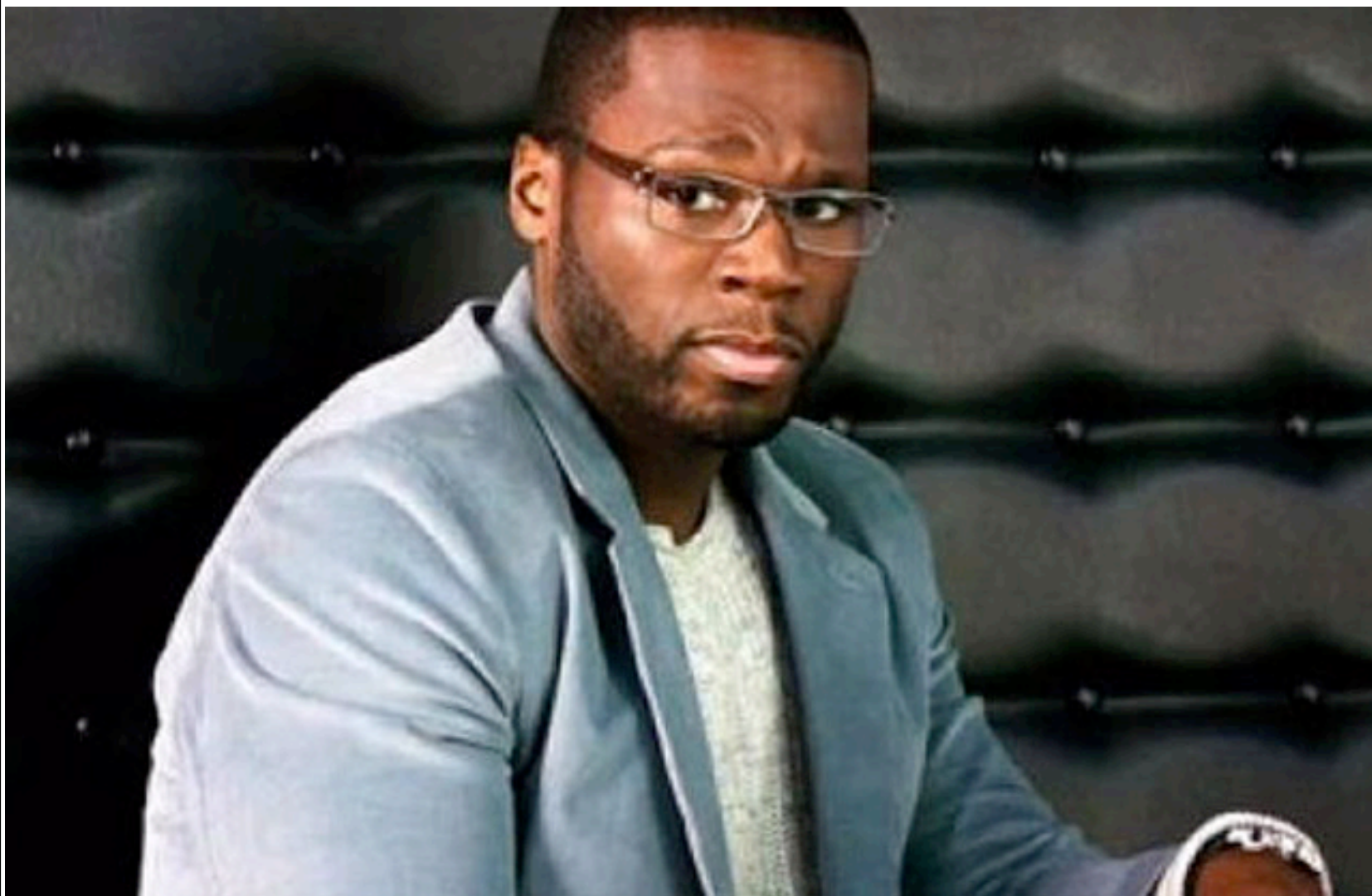
Cellblock KickAss: Rottmayer (Arnold Schwarzenegger) and Briskin (Sylvester Stallone) in ‘Escape Plan’  
*Photo credit: Summit Entertainment*

Getting a bit bored with the game, Breslin takes a job for the CIA, to escape from their latest maximum security outlet. The kicker is it is a set-up, and Breslin is actually in the cooler, with no contact with his team. His only ally seems to be an international financial hacker, Rottmayer (Schwarzenegger), and they become unlikely (naturally) associates against a sadistic warden (Jim Caviezel). This time it's personal.

Sylvester Stallone playing a character, rather than a dopey stereotype of his own image, will wonders ever cease? He is quite believable as a savant security man, part Blackwater, part kick-your-ass-for-eyeballing-him. The screenplay keeps the character mysterious, even though they break out the wife-and-kid-dead hackery. Stallone was relishing playing a deeper character, and despite his still annoying monotone, he delivers the goods.

Schwarzenegger is in a purge mode. Rather than play another variation on the I'll-be-back guy, the script creates him as a sidekick to Stallone's character, and uses his ties to the financial world to manufacture some more odd trickery. He fakes a freak-out, speaking only in German. After his last five years or so, the Teutonic boy inside him really brought out a eerie babbling. It's hard to recall a more disturbing outcry from the Governator. It was like witnessing primal scream therapy.

The tightly woven script contains many surprises, and allows Caviezel's evil warden to chew some substantial scenery. And it was refreshing to see a religious theme to the escape – redemption? Release? Freedom? It was all contained in the narrative, which seemed to point toward the cooperation of America (Stallone), Europe (Arnold) and the Middle East (Faran Tahir as Javed) against the plutocrats of those wealthy tribes. It's so much fun to read into an action movie.



Self Described Techno-Thug Hush (50 Cent) in 'Escape Plan'  
Photo credit: Summit Entertainment

The surprising supporting cast – Amy Ryan ("The Office"), 50 Cent in a totally straight arrow role and the great Sam Neill, whose smaller part as a conflicted doctor was actually the moral center of the titular plan. And when a part calls for an oily bureaucrat, enter Vincent D'Onofrio. He can corrupt any straight ahead grey flannel man. For example, his CEO has germophobia.

The stars of the 1970s are taking their last laps around the track or have already crossed the finish line (Jack Nicholson). It's good to see the former kings Sly and Arnold not going gently into the good night, but with a bang, and a louder bang. As Sly Stallone himself might say, "Yo Adrian! I escaped!"

*"Escape Plan" opens everywhere on October 18th. Featuring Bill Sylvester Stallone, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Prison, Jim Caviezel, Amy Ryan, Vincent D'Onofrio, 50 Cent and Sam Neill. Screenplay by Miles Chapman and Jason Keller. Directed by Mikael Hafström. Rated "R"*



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